

REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-3 and 6-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-9 and 13-16 are rejected. Claims 1-16 are objected to. Claims 1-14 are currently amended. Claims 4 and 5 are cancelled.

Claims 17-20 are new.

The drawings are objected to in that they lack the reference signs S1 and Slcs.

S1 and Slcs are defined in the specification as the surface area of the first edge surface (4), and the surface area of the largest cross-section of the panel, respectively.

The specification points out where the surface area of largest cross-section occurs. For example, in the embodiment of Fig. 1, Slcs occurs at the second edge surface (5) (see page 9, line 34-page 10, line 1), while in the embodiment of Fig. 2, Slcs occurs at the center portion of the panel (see page 13, lines 14-16).

Thus, the specification clearly explains which cross-sections in the figures correspond to S1 and Slcs. However, since S1 and Slcs are surface areas, not cross-sections, they occur in a plane perpendicular to the plane of the drawings. The symbols S1 and Slcs are thus not reference signs and should not be shown in the drawings.

Accordingly, it is urged that the drawings are acceptable in their present form, and that the objection should be withdrawn.

The specification is objected to in that it lacks headings. Applicant respectfully declines to add headings, as they are not required.

The Abstract is objected to in that it is not a single paragraph on a single sheet of paper.

While the Abstract is a single paragraph on a single sheet of paper, it is currently replaced with a replacement Abstract which is revised to reduce its length and to improve its form.

Accordingly, it is urged that the objection to the Abstract be withdrawn.

Claims 1-16 are objected to in that the phrases 'in that' and 'characterized in that' are not in accord with U.S. practice and should be changed to 'wherein'. These changes have been made by the current amendments to claims 1-14. Claims 15 and 16 do not contain these phrases.

Claim 12 is objected to in that the term 'the structure' has no antecedent basis. Antecedent basis is currently provided by changing the dependency of claim 12 from claim 10 to claim 11, as suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, it is urged that the objections to the claims have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 13, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Gotoh et al. published US patent application 2003/0137821 (herein 'Gotoh').

Claim 1 is currently amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 4 and 5, and claims 4 and 5 are cancelled.

Gotoh neither teaches nor suggests that the surface of the second edge surface is specularly or diffusely reflecting or is provided with a specularly or diffusely reflecting material, as now called for by claim 1.

Regarding claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 15 and 16, without conceding the patentability per se of these claims, they are patentable by virtue of their dependency.

Accordingly, claims 1-3, 7, 8, 13 and 15-16 are not anticipated by Gotoh, and the rejection is in error and should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 6, 9, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakabayashi et al. published US patent application 2001/0019479 (herein 'Nakabayashi').

Nakabayashi discloses a light guide member with parallel top and bottom faces. See para. [0011]. In Figs. 5 and 6, the light guide has first and second transparent plates (30) and (6). Plate (30) has a plane bottom face, and a plurality of stepwise slopes (131) arranged at specified intervals in the top face. Top plate (6) has a top plane surface and a bottom face with contours which match those of plate (30). Plate (6) is referred to as a compensating plate. See paras. [0140-0144]. A material such as a bonding material fills the space between the contoured faces of plates (30) and (6). See para. [0148].

Thus, the contoured surface is buried within the interior of the light guide, and both the front and rear surfaces are plane surfaces which are parallel to one another.

In contrast, Applicant's claim 1 calls for a stepped rear surface. Moreover, claim 1 calls for the second edge surface to be specularly or diffusely reflecting.

Regarding claim 6, the Examiner has referred to Fig. 23(c) of Nakabayashi. However, surfaces (243) are not stepped, i.e., they are not parallel to the front surface (321, 322), as called for by claim 6 through its dependency on claim 1, and as called for by new claim 17.

Regarding claim 9, Nakabayashi's touch panel (380) having a diffuse surface (381) is a separate element placed behind the panel, not part of the front wall of the device.

While not conceding the patentability per se of claim 15 and 16, it is pointed out that these claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency, for the reasons already advanced with respect to claim 1.

Accordingly, claims 1, 6, 9 and 15-17 are not anticipated by Nakabayashi, and the rejection is in error and should be withdrawn.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Gotoh in view of Lammers US patent 6,672,734.

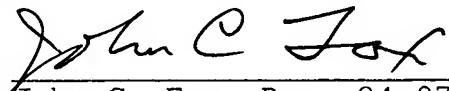
While not conceding the patentability per se of claim 14, it is pointed out that claim 14 is patentable by virtue of its dependency, for the reasons already advanced with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 14 should be withdrawn.

Claims 10-12 have been indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the objections of record and to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 10-12 have been rewritten as suggested by the Examiner, and presented as new claims 18-20.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objections and rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application to be otherwise in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,


John C. Fox, Reg. 24,975
Consulting Patent Attorney
203-329-6584